

REMARKS

The indication that claims 9-16 are objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, is acknowledged.

By the above amendment, the features of objected to claim 9 have been incorporated into parent claim 7, such that claim 7 represents objected to claim 9 written in independent form and should now be in condition for allowance, noting that by the present amendment, dependent claim 9 as well as independent claim 8 and its dependent claim 20 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Dependent objected to claims 10-12 have been retained in dependent form dependent upon claim 7, as amended to incorporate the features of dependent claim 9 therein, with such claims being amended to correspond to the language of claim 7. Thus, these claims should also be considered allowable at this time. Furthermore, objected to claim 13 has been written in independent form, with rejected to dependent claim 14 being amended to depend from claim 13 and being amended to correspond to the language of claim 13. Thus, claims 13 and 14, which have been objected to, should now be in condition for allowance. Additionally, claim 15 which has been objected to has been rewritten in independent form, such that this claim should now be in condition for allowance, and objected to claim 16 has been amended to depend from claim 15, while being amended to correspond to the language of claim 15. Thus, claims 15 and 16 should also now be in condition for allowance.

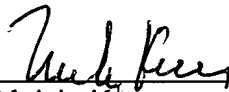
As to the rejection of claims 7, 8, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Toda et al (US Patent 5,642,343) in view of Bakx et al (US Patent 5,303,217), this rejection is considered to be obviated by the cancellation of claims 8 and 20 and the amendment of claim 7 to incorporate the features of objected to claim 9 therein, such that claim 7, as amended, should now be in condition for allowance. Since claim 19 has been retained in dependent form as being dependent

from claim 7 which should be in condition for allowance, applicants submit that claim 19 should also be in condition for allowance, and the rejection of claim 19 should also be obviated by the present amendment herein. Accordingly, discussion of the cited art is considered unnecessary.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants submit that all claims remaining in this application should now be in condition for allowance, and issuance of an action of a favorable nature is courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, applicant's petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (500.37445CX1) and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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